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# THE KINDERGARTEN IN CERTAIN CITY SCHOOL SURVEYS

By

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# THE KINDERGARTEN IN CERTAIN CITY SCHOOL SURVEYS

## INTRODUCTION

Numerous requests concerning standards and practices of kindergarten procedure have been received from superintendents, supervisors, teachers, and laymen interested in education. These requests indicate a desire to know what phases of kindergarten education are being criticized or commended, and also what standards and policies are being suggested for kindergarten education.

Recommendations found in the surveys examined were made to meet specific conditions in local situations. They are of value for other communities to the extent to which similar conditions exist in these communities. Therefore a composite statement of survey findings should be of help in judging the value of kindergarten procedures in any community.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Because of the variety of information desired by superintendents, supervisors, principals, teachers, and laymen, who are interested in kindergarten education, as comprehensive a study as possible has been made of the relevant suggestions and comments found in surveys of public school systems. It was not possible to include in the analysis all problems connected with the administration of kindergartens. Such phases as statistics, salaries, costs of maintenance and equipment have not been considered, as in most surveys these items are incorporated in the statements for the elementary schools as a whole.

The surveys studied were selected because (1) they spread over a long period of time (1915-1924); (2) they discuss the work done in many parts of the country; (3) they present problems which arise in places varying in size and in community interests; and (4) they were made by leading educators. Most of these surveys covered entire city school systems. The survey of the kindergartens in Richmond, Ind., is a survey of the one department only. The survey of Hawaii is included because the study of the educational situation on the islands was so largely a study of the work in Honolulu.

*Surveys quoted*

Cities	Date	Publishers
Alton, Ill.	1918	Melling & Gaskin, Alton, Ill.
Baltimore, Md.	1921	School Committee, Baltimore, Md.
Brookline, Mass.	1917	School Committee, Brookline, Mass.
Cleveland, Ohio	1917	Survey Committee Cleveland Foundation, Cleveland, Ohio.
Columbia, S. C.	1918	Department of the Interior, U. S. Bureau of Education, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.
El Paso, Tex.	1922	Department of Printing, City Schools, El Paso, Tex.
Elyria, Ohio	1918	Department of the Interior, U. S. Bureau of Education, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.
Hawaii	1920	Do.
Honesdale, Pa.	1921	Press Publishing Co., East Stroudsburg, Pa.
Memphis, Tenn.	1920	Department of the Interior, U. S. Bureau of Education, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.
New Bedford, Mass.	1922	School Committee, New Bedford, Mass.
Philadelphia, Pa.	1921	Public Education and Child Labor Association, Philadelphia, Pa.
Radnor Township, Pa.	1924	Department of the Interior, U. S. Bureau of Education (unpublished).
Richmond, Ind.	1917	University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill.
St. Louis, Mo.	1917	World Book Co., Yonkers, N. Y.
Salt Lake City, Utah	1916	Do.
San Francisco, Calif.	1917	Department of the Interior, U. S. Bureau of Education, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.
Sparta, Wis.	1921	Board of Education, Sparta, Wis.
Springfield, Mass.	1923	Institute of Educational Research, Teachers College, New York City.
Stamford, Conn.	1923	Do.
Swarthmore, Pa.	1923	Department of the Interior, U. S. Bureau of Education (unpublished).
Watertown, N. Y.	1924	Institute of Educational Research, Teachers College, New York City.
Wilmington, Del.	1921	Department of the Interior, U. S. Bureau of Education, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.
Winchester, Mass.	1921	Do.

## TYPES OF CRITICISMS AND COMMENDATIONS

Almost every phase of kindergarten practice and administration has been severely criticized or strongly commended in the surveys. Taken as a whole, there seems to be good reason to believe that the kindergartens of the country are conducted as efficiently as any other part of the school system. Certain phases of kindergarten organization receive both critical and commendatory statements.

Many kindergarten rooms are criticized because they do not meet modern standards in regard to space, hygienic arrangements, or furniture. Other rooms are commended because they fulfill these requirements and because they are beautiful.

Kindergarten equipment is not considered up to standard unless it includes some physical apparatus, large building materials, and suitable tools and supplies for woodwork, painting, and modeling.

Definite recommendations are made with regard to such problems, as eliminating mass teaching and dividing classes into small groups, so that the instruction given in them will more nearly meet the needs of individual children; keeping records of the achievement of individual pupils; providing better methods of promotion; studying the effect of kindergarten training on children's progress through the grades; and unifying the work in kindergarten and primary grades.

Recommendations concerning the curriculum emphasize the need for a broader interpretation of the term and the establishment of definite objectives, with suggestions as to how they may be reached. Comments on the different subjects of the course of study are seldom given separately, but in connection with the problems of the curricu-



lum as a whole. In the later surveys there is an even greater demand for those activities which will aid children in establishing good health habits, good language habits, and good citizenship habits, as well as good thinking habits. The surveys which discuss these topics also emphasize the fact that successful attainment of these goals depends not only upon the kind of curriculum used but also upon the ability of the teacher, the kind and amount of equipment available, and the guidance given teachers by the supervisor.

While the amount of preparation that kindergarten teachers in charge of classes have received is equal to or greater than that received by the other teachers in the primary schools, it is often criticized as being narrow. A number of surveys definitely state that kindergarten teachers should receive their training in an institution which recognizes kindergarten-primary teaching as a single problem.

To do her best work, a teacher must continue her professional studies after leaving the normal or training school. So certain school systems are criticized for not providing opportunities for advanced study or other means for professional growth.

Adequate supervision is considered necessary for professional growth and for continued successful teaching. This supervision should be given by one who has had broad educational advantages and a thorough kindergarten-primary training. It is recommended that wherever possible one supervisor be put in charge of both kindergarten and primary grades, so as to help develop a unified type of education for children between 4 and 8 years of age.

Kindergarten objectives, curriculum, and equipment have been greatly modified within recent years to give children a better preparation for participating in the activities of a good primary school. In turn, the kindergarten has greatly modified the spirit and organization of the primary grades.

While kindergarten principles are widely accepted in theory, not all school authorities have been interested enough in prefirst-grade education to establish a sufficient number of kindergartens to accommodate all the children of proper age for this type of education. The surveys often recommend that principals, supervisors, and teachers should make greater effort to have all children begin their school life in the kindergarten.

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## Chapter I

### HOUSING, EQUIPMENT, AND SUPPLIES

At all times kindergarten teachers have believed that the surroundings in which a child works and plays are of vital importance in determining his attitude toward the thing he is doing. In their



desire to have the rooms cheerful they often produced an overstimulating environment. Recently, considerable attention has been given to the effect of environment upon emotional reactions, and kindergarten teachers have changed their opinion as to what constitutes a suitable work and play place for young children. In the new plans for kindergarten rooms the main considerations are ample space, simplicity of arrangement, restful atmosphere, proper hygienic conditions, and adequate storage provisions for the great variety of materials and toys considered necessary for the education of young children.

Surveyors have consciously held these requirements in mind in setting their standards for judging kindergarten rooms, furniture, equipment, toys, and construction materials. They have directed attention not only toward the undesirable features of rooms and equipment for small children, but have given standards for planning and equipping kindergarten rooms in new buildings.

#### PRESENT TYPES OF KINDERGARTEN ROOMS

Usually "kindergarten rooms are very well kept, and pictures and growing plants give them a delightfully homelike atmosphere." (Brookline.) Often they are the most attractive rooms in the school building, being "beautifully and tastefully decorated and furnished, well lighted, and ventilated." (St. Louis.)

"Kindergarten rooms are of three types." Those of the first type are "large, well lighted, with ample closet room for supplies," and have "modern juvenile toilet equipment." Rooms of the second type are large, fairly well lighted, and supplied with closet space and proper toilet equipment to a limited degree. The third type "is found in the older buildings where the kindergartens have been placed for the most part in rooms which were least desirable for other purposes." (Philadelphia.) It is possible that the reason for putting the youngest children in the last type of room is that in many places the kindergarten has "been considered a luxury" (Philadelphia), and so must in no way hamper the comfort or convenience of the other grades.

#### LOCATION OF KINDERGARTEN ROOMS

Wherever school buildings have been planned to include kindergartens the architects have considered not only the size and arrangement but also the relationship of the room to other rooms in the building, to exits, sunlight, and playgrounds. (Springfield.) "Rooms built especially for kindergartens in the future should have eastern or southern exposure." (Baltimore.) They should also be of easy access to entrances and playground, and their arrangement whenever possible should include "one large room with one or more smaller rooms." (Springfield.)



Where the kindergartens are housed in the older buildings and—  
until an adequate building program can be put through it is recommended that wherever possible classes be removed from cramped, dark rooms. (Baltimore.)

### SIZE OF ROOMS

The rooms should be large, because—

in no other class is adequate size of rooms so necessary as in the kindergarten. The age of the kindergarten child and the activities in which he should be engaged demand sufficient floor space. \* \* \* Limited area per child forces a formality in classroom procedure that defeats the very purpose of kindergarten teaching. (Stamford.)

### HYGIENIC REQUIREMENTS

As health is of chief importance, the rooms should be large, well ventilated, sunny, and simply furnished, with very few decorations and no hangings. The walls and ceilings should be hard, so that they may be periodically disinfected and the woodwork painted. \* \* \* It is imperative that the floors be perfectly joined and thoroughly cleaned, as young children are very susceptible to germ diseases. (Philadelphia.)

Another reason for having the right kind of kindergarten rooms is that teachers also need the best possible environment in which to work.

Depression and discouragement on the part of teachers are caused by extremely unattractive, discolored, and neglected walls and woodwork. (Baltimore.)

New rooms should have special hygienic provisions. These should include toilets "with juvenile equipment." (Baltimore.) Failure to have satisfactory accommodations of this kind makes it "difficult to start the right sanitary habits" so essential to the children's health. (Philadelphia.)

There should also be a sufficient number of—

low closets for storing materials and individual lockers for children's incomplete work. (Baltimore.)

The accessibility to supplies for the children is an important matter. Children should be able to select and put away materials. With this arrangement the teacher can more readily train the children in habits of self-reliance, orderliness, and purposeful selection of material. (Philadelphia.)

From the standpoint of the teacher, also, it is unfortunate that often cupboards "are so arranged as to be practically inaccessible to the children." (Philadelphia.) This arrangement "makes the teacher's work more difficult." (Baltimore.)

Even with the urgent demand for all necessary facilities for proper housing—

the tendency in planning rooms for children of kindergarten age is toward extreme simplicity. (Philadelphia.)

This very simplicity may be enhanced by the development of open-air or semi-open-air rooms in such places as have a moderate enough climate. Any school carrying out such a plan would set —

high standards for promoting health opportunities for kindergarten children in our American public schools. (Baltimore.)

Whether the kindergarten rooms are new or old they need to be kept even more immaculate than the rooms for the older children because of the greater susceptibility of the younger children to germ diseases and because their physical height brings them nearer to the floor. In the older rooms the "age of the building \* \* \* makes necessary extreme care in cleaning." (Philadelphia.) The standard set is that the floors shall be mopped or scrubbed once a week or more frequently, and swept daily, so that the children will not be "endangered while working on the floor." (Philadelphia.)

### FURNITURE

The changed attitude toward children's activities in kindergarten has greatly modified the type of furniture and equipment needed. Small, smooth-topped tables for individual work have replaced the large tables with their unhygienic network of lines. (Radnor.)

All the surveys which mention the size of tables recommend small tables at which children can work alone. Two sizes of tops are recommended—20 by 36 inches (Witchester) and 42 by 18 inches (Baltimore). Either size should be furnished in three heights—18, 19, and 20 inches.

In some of the reports the criticism of the furniture is not directed toward the people who are responsible for supplying it, but toward those who use it. Even when teachers have three sizes of tables and of chairs at their disposal, sometimes—

very little effort is made to adapt the height of the chairs to the height of the table. (Philadelphia.)

In certain schools the tables are—

massed in solid or hollow squares placed often without regard to possible eye strain. (Watertown.)

### PLAY APPARATUS

Modern equipment for kindergartens includes slides, swings, seesaws, climbing bars, and rope. Such material must be carefully planned for the needs of the children of this age. \* \* \* Where playgrounds can not be secured, semi-open-air rooms, built on the roof of the school buildings, are made practicable for outdoor work or play. (Philadelphia.)

In many places play apparatus is so inadequate as to make it almost impossible for kindergarten children to receive the benefit of this kind of education. Many teachers, however, make especial efforts to have their children play out of doors. A suggestion for obtaining apparatus for kindergarten children is given in the



Springfield report, which says that "playground equipment is entirely lacking" but "provision for apparatus is being made through funds appropriated by mothers' clubs." (Springfield.)

The attitude of the children in Winchester, Mass., during their outdoor play is criticized because with many it—

led to become aimless or boisterous. This was natural because organized ring games are usually artificial out of doors, and children need apparatus for vigorous play.

Many modern kindergartens have some playground apparatus in the kindergarten room.

The advantage of having—

apparatus in the kindergarten room is that children may find relief from the finer type of work by exercising the larger muscles through vigorous activity. It is more valuable to carry on such exercise out of doors, but the advantage of having some play apparatus indoors is that it is always accessible to the children. In the right type of school building there should be a well-equipped playroom for the use of the kindergarten and also for the first and second grades. (Winchester.)

### PLAY MATERIALS

Several reports suggest that a child's—

choice of activities depends on the ideas he has to express, the materials in the environment for his use, and the opportunity the teacher gives for such expression. (Springfield.)

There have been radical changes in the last 15 years in the nature of materials deemed desirable" (Baltimore) for kindergartens. These changes have been due in part to the changes made in the curriculum. They are also due in part to changes in the methods for teaching young children.

The kindergartners of an earlier day regarded the whole series of gifts and occupations as essential, because each was supposed to have an intrinsic value peculiar to itself and to afford the children a type of experience on no account to be missed. On the other hand, and according to present-day theory, the various materials are now valued primarily as a means by which the children may give expression to their ideas and carry out their play purposes. This means that any of the traditional material may be discarded and that the teacher may go to any source to find other materials which serve more adequately the purposes of the kindergarten. (Richmond.)

The development of any social project demands the addition of toys and odds and ends of many kinds of materials to the regular equipment of blocks and construction materials. (Radnor.)

Dolls, doll furniture, toy utensils, and toy animals—

provide for the type of work where the children (1) work in small groups, (2) initiate their own projects, (3) reproduce the life of society through their plays of family or community life. (Winchester.)

It should be the duty of the teacher to see that the supply of this kind of material is continually replenished. There should always be a sufficient

amount on hand to stimulate the children's imagination for the improvement of their work. (Radner.)

Pupils have not reached the stage where books can be of great value. Their training must come from first-hand information, from experimentation with constructional and art materials, and their thinking must be largely in the concrete situations which arise in their attempts to carry out their plans and schemes of work and play. (Baltimore.)

A theory in line with the best modern thought can not be consistently worked out by means of an equipment designed for an extremely conservative and now almost abandoned practice. (Salt Lake City.)

But modern equipment—

is not a preventative of work of the older and more formal type. (Brookline.)

This is especially true where projects are not carried over from day to day and where—

so much time is consumed in stacking and boxing the blocks that children have no opportunity to enjoy and to play with the products of their handwork. (Brookline.)

The amount of materials needed in supplies and equipment depends largely on the curriculum in use; the value of these materials depends on the teacher's vision in her guidance of children to develop ideas of worth through these materials. (Stamford.)

Therefore, teachers should be given much help by supervisors in the selection of materials and in their use.

Materials listed under supplies and equipment for kindergarten should be valued by school administrators in the same way that they value books and laboratory materials in the elementary schools and high-school classes. \* \* \* Thrift should be encouraged in the use of materials, but not to the limitation of good work. (Stamford.)

### THE LIBRARY CORNER

Within the past few years another type of material has also been considered necessary in a well-equipped kindergarten. This is found in the "library corner." The value of picture books is well summed up in the following commendation:

In every room observed, a classroom library was established in which children were given the opportunity to discover things in books. In many classes the library corner was one of the most popular spots in the room. In almost all classes interests and appreciations of books were being developed, and right habits in the use of books and responsibilities for borrowed books were being formed. (Springfield.)

Realization of the value of picture books in the education of young children is by no means universal. There are still many places which deserve criticism because picture books are—

almost entirely lacking excepting in schools where the teachers provided them from their own funds. The need for more experiences to acquaint children with the best children's literature and picture books which tell stories in a language that kindergarten children can interpret is very apparent. The



thought content of the stories, pictures, and related experiences of kindergarten children is very significant in its influence on their readiness to read and appreciation of written symbols. (Stamford.)

### NEED FOR REVISION OF SUPPLY ORDER LISTS

Until lately the surveys have criticized the lack of large blocks and a few other necessary supplies for constructive activity, but now criticism is extended to include the lack of material for work requiring the use of larger tools. Many schools realize that work in wood and with large painting materials is necessary to help little children to gain control of the larger muscles. The following criticism of materials available for creative work could be applied fairly to many schools:

There was material for wood construction in only one kindergarten observed. Modeling materials were inadequate. Painting materials for large painting activities were found in only two rooms, [although] sand tables and sand, paper materials, music materials were sufficient in number to receive high rating. (Springfield.)

With these newer additions to the lists of desirable materials there is even more need in many places to recommend—

that there be an entire revision of the order list worked out by the cooperation of supervisor and teachers. (Philadelphia.)

As it is not usually practical to entirely reequip all kindergartens at once it is recommended that—

Until the equipment necessary to carry on satisfactory teaching is provided, a kindergarten budget should supply some needed equipment to each kindergarten annually. (Stamford.)

If many of the undesirable materials were eliminated from the order lists undoubtedly "the money now spent for colored papers, cut in small squares, weaving mats, parquetry papers \* \* \* would pay for these other materials" which are now considered so necessary. (Richmond.) The Baltimore survey makes the added suggestion that a small margin be allowed the teacher so that she "may meet minor needs as they arise."

### SUMMARY

In the surveys studied there is an emphasis upon the need for large, well-lighted rooms with simple furnishings. These rooms should be located on the east or south side of the buildings and within easy access to exits leading to the playgrounds and streets. Wherever possible there should be at least one large room with one or more smaller adjoining rooms. Other requirements for good kindergarten rooms include the treatment of all surfaces—walls and floors—so that they can be easily cleaned and disinfected. While some of the present rooms fulfill these and all other requirements,

some only partially meet the standards, and others are far below. In some buildings the poorest rooms have been given to the kindergarten because they were not desirable for other uses. Wherever kindergartens are located in cramped, dark rooms it is recommended that they be moved as soon as possible to rooms which comply with or approach standard requirements.

Outdoor play apparatus is recommended for all schools. Where it is impossible to have these on the playground it is suggested that they be placed on the roof or in open-air or semiopen-air rooms, so that all children may have the opportunity of working and playing out of doors for a part of each day.

Modern furniture for the kindergarten includes small, smooth-topped tables, in place of the older large ones, with a network of lines on the tops. Tables should be of three heights and the chairs furnished should also be of three heights to fit the tables.

Changes made in the curriculum and methods of instruction have demonstrated the need for materials which call for the use of the larger muscles or which aid the children in expressing their ideas more adequately.

In most places supply lists should be entirely revised by the supervisor and teachers, but, as it is not usually practicable to reequip all the kindergartens at one time, it is recommended that the kindergarten budget be so administered that some new equipment be furnished each kindergarten annually. It is further suggested that a small amount of money be allowed each teacher to meet minor needs as they arise.

Materials should be most carefully selected and should be looked upon by the school authorities in the same light as are the textbooks or laboratory and studio materials in the elementary and high-school grades. The children should be encouraged to use their materials economically, but not to the extent that they will be unable to do good work.

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## Chapter II

### ORGANIZATION OF KINDERGARTENS

Almost every phase of kindergarten administration has been discussed in relation to some specific local need. Problems selected for review in this bulletin have been chosen because they have been more widely treated than certain others and because the recommendations are clear and definite.

#### AGE OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

Whenever the age of the children attending kindergarten is suggested in the surveys the impression is given that these classes are established primarily for 5-year old children, although many of



them admit 4-year old children also. Five years is definitely stated as the kindergarten age in the recommendations made for establishing kindergartens in the Wilmington schools. This report says:

Children who enter kindergarten at 5 not only run less risk of failing in the customary work of the first grade, but are capable of doing work of a much better quality.

A similar impression is given by those who say that the kindergarten reduces the amount of retardation not only by fitting children to find themselves "more quickly in the usual work of the school" (Memphis), but also "indirectly by keeping children out of the first grade until they are more mature." (Memphis.)

The child who has entered 1B younger than 5 years has not progressed so well, on the whole, as the child who has entered at 6 years of age. He gets through school younger, it is true, but at a greater failure expense. (Watertown.)

A different point of view is expressed in the report of the New Bedford survey, as follows:

On account of social conditions, particularly the much greater language handicap that New Bedford children suffer on entering school . . . the age of admission to kindergarten should be lowered to  $4\frac{1}{2}$ , even to 4 years. And children should be admitted to first grade as soon after 5 as they are prepared for the work of the first grade. This would mean that most children could enter the first grade by  $5\frac{1}{2}$  years of age, and most of those who have had a year in kindergarten would be ready to begin the first grade at 5 or shortly thereafter. (New Bedford.)

#### GROUPING CHILDREN ACCORDING TO ABILITY

Differences in personality and ability show themselves early in children's lives. To meet these differences certain surveys suggest that it is as desirable to group children in the kindergarten according to their ability as it is to group them in this way in the later grades. There are now a number of places where "each kindergarten school is divided into groups according to maturity and ability," and the assignment of work is graded according to group abilities." (St. Louis.)

One "type of organization that is used in many larger cities recognizes the needs of both 4 and 5 year old children" by providing—for two kindergarten grades, one for the children of 4 or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  years maturity and one for the children of 5 or  $5\frac{1}{2}$  years maturity. This is a highly desirable arrangement, as it allows a gradation of work and play more suited to the needs of prefirst-grade children than can be provided in one grade with children varying widely in ability. (Radnor.)

#### PROVISION FOR INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION

According to the surveys, the kindergarten is doing much to help break up the practice of mass teaching and to provide opportunity for the individualization of instruction. There seems to be a con-



sensus of opinion among those who have made the surveys that not only should all subject matter "grow out of the immediate interests of the children" (Winchester), but that the activities selected should provide "play and work exercises adapted not only to age but to individual needs." (Philadelphia.)

The reports suggest that many kindergarten teachers realize that "every child is a unique specimen of human nature" (Honesdale), and by his behavior tells us what his nature is and what his education should be. The kindergarten, "in the disclosure of personal traits through work and play, is the teacher's pedagogical book of revelation and her guide as to what to do next." (Honesdale.) Teachers "are to be commended for the steps they have taken in providing opportunity for choice of activities." (Springfield.)

### SIZE OF CLASS

There is a difference in the estimate of the number of children that should be enrolled in a kindergarten class. One survey reports an actual average attendance of 32 children for each session and adds, "There are no assistants to the kindergarten teacher. This number is within the control of one teacher." (Philadelphia.) Two surveys recommend a smaller number of children for each teacher, but none suggest a higher number.

No teacher in the kindergarten should be responsible for more than 25 children at one time. As soon as the number of children exceeds 25 a trained assistant should be appointed. (Stamford.)

School authorities generally agree that between 15 and 20 is the ideal number for one teacher to have in kindergarten, but that the number may be raised to an average attendance of between 20 and 25 without too great a strain being placed on children and teacher. They also agree that a group of over 50 children in one room, even with several teachers, is too great a social strain for young children. Large numbers of children working and playing together demand a degree of inhibition and self-control which is greater than ought to be expected of children of kindergarten age. (Radnor.)

### LENGTH OF SESSIONS

The New Bedford survey gives another recommendation which is radically different from the usual type of organization, when it states that—

the kindergarten-subprimary grade should be open to children the full day, instead of one session only, where the parents desire full day's attendance.

The opposite view is suggested but not definitely stated in the Radnor recommendations and in the Brookline report. In describing several types of organization the Radnor report mentions the "double-session plan"; that is, one group coming in the morning and another in the afternoon, as one way of solving the difficulty caused by the overcrowded condition found in one kindergarten.



The Brookline survey states that the hours for the kindergarten session should coincide with the hours for the morning session of the other grades.

### TIME SCHEDULE

Educators realize that young children can not be expected to give close attention for long periods of time when they are receiving formal instruction. On the other hand, they also realize that often there is a great loss of inspiration and energy when children are not given sufficient time to complete a piece of work in which they are interested. Cutting up the kindergarten day arbitrarily into small sections is not conducive to the development of good work or thought habits, and is severely criticized in certain surveys.

This criticism is made of schools in which the "daily session is divided into short periods of from 15 to 30 minutes duration." (Philadelphia.) This report continues the criticism in the following manner:

Very often there are two 30-minute work periods in a half-day program. In a few programs there are work periods of 50 minutes, but in general there are no long ones. A longer work hour is needed for constructive work or representative play when initiated and self-directed by the children.

Child-study has shown much of the old-time practice in relation to the rigid time schedule to have been opposed to the way a little child actually works and plays. A little child does not hold his interests within 15-minute periods or half-hour periods. Absorption in work is one of the best habits that can be encouraged, and recent kindergarten studies show that a child's span of interest increases steadily through one or two years as he works with kindergarten materials. Kindergarten work lends itself more readily to a flexible time schedule than does primary work, because of the organization into classes made necessary by the introduction of reading, but in both the kindergarten and the primary, there should be work periods where the children are given time to experiment with materials and to work out projects related to subject matter. (Winchester.)

### PROMOTIONS

"Promotions are often a source of annoyance to the kindergarten and first-grade teachers." (Philadelphia.) Certain surveys state that teachers are not "in sympathy with the mode of sending children from the kindergarten to the first grade." (Cleveland.) This seems to be especially true where chronological age is the determining factor. There are States in which the law specifically requires children to be "admitted to the first grade at 6 years, but not all, however, are prepared to do the work of the first grade at that age." (Cleveland.) Such a system of promotion—

often floods the first grades with backward children and those who can not speak English. (Philadelphia.) There are some States in which it is possible to partially remedy this condition. (Richmond.)

**Often—**

children under 6 years of age may not enter the first grade, but since the compulsory school age is 7, children may be retained in kindergarten beyond the age of 6, if they are sufficiently immature to make a longer period of kindergarten training desirable. (Richmond.)

Where readiness for promotion is determined by chronological age and the—

children are promoted only once a year. Instead of twice a year, there is a tendency either to place immature children in the first grade or to keep them in the kindergarten until they are too advanced for kindergarten work. (Winchester.)

To prevent this injustice, semiannual promotions are recommended as a means for "better adjustment between the kindergarten and first grade." (Winchester.)

An attitude toward promotion more in harmony with present-day tendencies is well stated in the following quotations:

There should be such a close relationship between the kindergarten and the primary school that children may not be compelled to remain in the kindergarten until the time of the half yearly promotions. They should be promoted when they give evidence of capability to do more advanced work. (Winchester.)

Effort should be made to promote children on the basis of intellectual maturity. (Philadelphia.)

**RECORDS**

One reason given for the difficulty of making satisfactory promotions from the kindergarten to the first grade is that few schools have kept records of children's activities and interests in the kindergarten.

Record cards should be used to show the development of each child in the kindergarten, and to test the value of the curriculum. (Stamford.)

The following quotation shows that there has been some systematic study along this line:

A commendable experimental attack on the problem of records of children's progress is being carried on among the kindergarten teachers, and a more uniform method of keeping records is later to culminate from this experimental work. (Springfield.)

If definite objectives are not set up and if frequent records are not made as to what is being accomplished in establishing desirable habits and attitudes mastery of skills, broadening of experience, growth in language and application of ideas, the teaching is certain to lack effectiveness. (Watertown.)

**SUMMARY**

Although specific recommendations for the betterment of local conditions, given in the survey reports, often differ in detail there is a certain similarity of thought about the fundamental characteristics of kindergarten organization.

Kindergartens are planned primarily for children 5 years of age, although in many places children are admitted at the age of 4. One



survey advocates the entrance of children into the kindergarten at 4, so that they may be admitted to the first grade as soon after they are 5 as they can be prepared for the work.

Children of the same age vary widely in ability; so it is recommended that they be grouped according to ability and that suitable work be given each group. Where there are enough children enrolled in the kindergarten to make it desirable, it is suggested that it would be well to establish two kindergarten grades. This plan would eliminate much repetition of work for those children who are to be in kindergarten two years.

One survey recommends that children be allowed to attend kindergarten all day, because of the economic and social situation in that particular locality. Other surveys suggest by implication that children shall be in kindergarten for a half day only, and preferably in the mornings.

An attendance of 32 children is the highest number mentioned as desirable. Fifteen to twenty in average daily attendance is considered the lowest desirable number. Between these extremes the standard is set at 25 for one teacher at each session. One survey recommends that not more than 50 children be in any one group even where there are several teachers, because of the great amount of inhibition necessary in larger social groups.\*

The law in many States requires that 6-year-old children be admitted to first grade even though many of them are not ready to profit by the work of the primary grade, and others are ready at an earlier age. Consequently many teachers in both the kindergarten and primary grades are not in sympathy with the methods of promotion used in their schools. This feeling is especially strong when promotions are made annually. Semiannual promotions are recommended, but if the work of the kindergarten and primary grades is closely articulated it would be possible to promote children at any time they are considered ready to profit by more advanced work.

It would be easier to know when promotions should be made if more adequate records of children's achievements were kept. These records would also help the primary teacher to base her work for the children upon the attitudes, habits, and fund of knowledge they bring with them from the kindergarten.

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### Chapter III

#### EVOLUTION OF THE CURRICULUM

The evolution of the kindergarten curriculum has been rapid and is by no means completed yet.

The kindergarten of to-day realizes the futility of giving its children intellectual food which they can not digest. In planning the course of study,



therefore, its tendency is to limit the source of subject matter to everyday experiences of the particular group of children concerned. It selects from these experiences those which are worth interpreting and extending, and it seeks to help the children to organize them through the different play activities and modes of expression which the kindergarten offers. (Richmond.)

Where there is no prescribed course of study—

the work is planned by the directors and varies in value according to the training and viewpoint of the individual. (Baltimore.)

A common understanding among teachers is necessary if there is not to be undue emphasis of one kind of experience to the neglect of other experiences of equal importance; the neglect of children developing certain conducts and appreciations of value; and an unbalanced evaluation of the needs and uses of certain supplies and equipment. (Springfield.)

There are indications that there are many kindergartens in which the conception of the curriculum is entirely too narrow or too static. Where such conditions exist the kindergarten does—

not sufficiently justify itself in bringing the experiences to the children which would meet the particular needs of the group and connect with an acceptable first-grade curriculum. (Stamford.)

One survey recommends—

that the teachers and the supervisors concerned work out a kindergarten-primary curriculum which shall provide for continuity in each of the subjects, namely, community life, industrial and fine arts, language, music, physical education, nature study, and number work. (Richmond.)

Other surveys recommend also that the—

curriculum should show the fundamental skills, appreciations, and knowledge necessary for the development of the social and physical needs of the kindergarten children. (Stamford.)

Standards should be defined without imposing uniformity of curriculum. (Baltimore.)

Where teachers are well equipped for their work "freedom of the individual teacher might be made to serve the highest interests of both kindergarten and grade schools," in developing a desirable curriculum. It is unfortunate that although some teachers "are more liberal in spirit and practice than others, there are fewer evidences of independent investigation and initiative on the part of the teachers than should characterize" (Brookline) the work in the kindergarten.

#### OBJECTIVES OF KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

The need of determining objectives for kindergarten-primary or kindergarten first-grade classes, together with the experiences necessary for children to have and with definite achievements to accomplish from those experiences, is (the) greatest immediate need for progress in the future. (Stamford.)

There seems to be a lack of—

common understanding among the teachers of the importance of all the objectives necessary for complete development. \* \* \* The result is an apparent



emphasis of one kind of experience to the neglect of other experiences of equal importance. (Springfield.)

In certain places the—

curriculum in its present form gives over-emphasis to skills and knowledge which is not conducive to a complete, well-balanced development. The problem of education is to make desired changes in thought, feeling, and action. Any curriculum must provide experiences which will bring changes in this three-fold aspect of behavior. (Springfield.)

*Constructive thinking.*—In the later surveys emphasis has been put upon the need for more constructive thinking and for less dictated work.

The great value in using materials for expression is in thinking one's way through to a result that is satisfactory. (Winchester.)

For this reason—

occupations should be planned for the children, whether in the kindergarten or in the first grade, which appeal to children as worth doing and which demand concentration and effort on their part. (Richmond.)

Practice in constructive thinking and in proving the value of the results of thinking are definitely seen in the manual activities and the original games of the kindergarten. But they are quite as necessary in making social adjustments. Sympathy for and with our neighbors is greatly increased by planning with them, working with them, and rejoicing with them over a common problem and its satisfactory solution. (Radnor.)

*Development of attitudes.*—One great criticism of the kindergarten by primary teachers is that children "think of the schoolroom as a playroom." (Philadelphia.) There are kindergartens in which the play spirit seems "to be rather indiscriminately present in all the activities." (St. Louis.) In those schools in which this situation prevails the exercises are "a kind of universal and unorganized recreation," in fact, are agents "for scattering not for focusing energy." (St. Louis.) The same survey reports, in describing a manual-arts lesson, that the "teacher made no serious attempt to establish in this exercise a different spirit or a different control from that in any exercise that might properly have the play spirit." (St. Louis.)

While this severe criticism is deserved in some kindergartens, there are others in which children are helped to realize the difference between work and play. A kindergarten of the better type—

establishes the beginnings of a work attitude toward the things the children do and (the beginnings) of an ability to evaluate skill, cooperation, and high standards of attainment. \* \* \* Children's activities will degenerate in the kindergarten or any grade if there are not enough worth-while things provided for them to do. (Swarthmore.)

On the other hand, it is just as true that they—

like to be held up to their highest ability. It gives them a sense of responsibility for accomplishment which helps to hold their interest in what they are



doing. When high standards are coupled with interesting things to be done, children grow in power and rejoice [in their growth]. (Swarthmore.)

Freedom in the selection of things to do and of ways and means for doing them helps children develop a greater appreciation of good and beautiful things, materials, and workmanship. Another means for changing children's attitude toward beautiful things is to help them "develop appreciation of the beauties of nature and cultivate curiosity in the wonders of nature." (Stamford.) This can be done by presenting varied and definite nature experiences.

Through all these activities the kindergarten protects the child's—emotions from the regressive tendency toward anger, self-feeling, suspicion, isolation, sullenness, and nervousness, and fosters good nature, open-mindedness, sociability, cheerfulness, and the habit of being happy. (Honesdale.)

*Social adjustment.*—Democratic ideals are the result of education and not of inheritance. (Radnor.) A good kindergarten helps children learn self-control through whole-hearted purposeful activity in their plays, games, rhythms, music, art, language, constructive work with materials, and regular duties. (Swarthmore.)

Several surveys state that—

self-control can be developed in the kindergarten with no more effort than that necessary in training the children to automatic response \* \* \* and will be a much more useful habit for the children to take with them into the first grade. (Richmond.)

While self-control plays an important part in making social adjustments, an appreciation of fair play is quite as essential.

The spirit of fair play is the active principle in sympathetic appreciation of the fine things others can do, in being the leader when you have something to give, and in accepting suggestions from each and every member of the group who has something to give you. It not only develops cooperation, but a recognition of the necessity for obedience to lawful authority. (Radnor.)

*Formation of habits.*—Habit formation is a necessary part of the educational process. The child's education begins long before he enters school. The kindergarten builds upon the habits that have been formed in the homes and supplements home training. (Winchester.)

A list of desirable habits would be very long. The ones specified in the report just quoted might be grouped under such headings as "Personal," "Hygiene," "Language," "Social behavior," "Courtesy," "Housekeeping," as well as those covering the usual activities of the kindergarten.

Good habits of work, built up through the various concrete activities (in the kindergarten), should also prove an asset when more formal subjects are undertaken later. (Baltimore.)

*Acquisition of knowledge.*—The kindergarten aims also to give the children a wealth of valuable first-hand experiences of interest to them which shall furnish ideas and concepts upon which may be based the education in symbols which begins in the first grade. (Baltimore.) The impulses and instincts and interests of the young child form the basis for the course of study, rather than



instruction from books \* \* \* The kindergarten opens the child's eyes to the world about him through excursions (Memphis), [observations and the various activities in which he engages].

### TEACHING PROCEDURES

It is generally conceded that "methods of using the materials are fully as important considerations as the materials themselves." (Richmond.) Where the "procedure is to conduct various activities in large groups under the direct control of the teacher" (Baltimore), the work is severely criticized. In such procedure, even with the most modern equipment, there is "practically no adaptation of method to the newer type of materials" (Brookline) because the teachers make "no independent study of the possibilities" (Brookline) of the newer equipment. This practice produces—

more building to dictation and less opportunity for free building and community building than is provided by the more progressive of the kindergartens. (Brookline.)

In certain places—

too much of the handwork in both the kindergarten and primary school has been in the nature of devices planned by the teacher to keep the children busy and carried out by the children with no demand being made upon their intelligence. (Winchester.)

Readiness on the part of the children to accept what is offered, however poor it may be, makes it doubly important for the teacher to protect them from unprofitable forms of activity. (Richmond.)

Kindergarten teachers, probably more than any group of teachers, are apt to do too much preparation of work—

leaving for the children only the last step or two of the whole process of construction. The results are likely to be excellent, but they do not represent children's work. If the teachers would plan simpler forms of occupation and would be satisfied with cruder products, they would be able to develop in the children a degree of independence in handwork which does not now exist, according to the reports (of many) of the first-grade teachers who receive children from the kindergarten. (Richmond.)

There are many similar criticisms in the surveys, but there are also many commendatory statements whenever—

children are allowed to make their own plans and carry them out in small groups of their own choice. (Philadelphia.) In every classroom visited there was evidence of opportunity for some choice of activity by the children \* \* \*. There was a genuine desire on the part of the teachers to allow children to give expression of ideas and feelings through the material that was available. (Springfield.)

When a child is set in the midst of a scientifically planned environment the teacher finds that—

problems arise through the use of materials which demand thought on the part of the child. After individual experiment, the child may join a small group on a larger project or the teacher may relate his isolated result to a

larger whole. For example, one child may be making a boat and another a train. Building a dock for the boat and running train tracks out on the dock so that freight may be transported gives the child a more complete idea of transportation and also enables the child to relate his ideas to the ideas of the group. (Winchester.)

Many more teachers would modify their procedure but are—

retarded by the lack of materials, the adjustment of old materials to new ideas, the struggle of combining freedom with order, and the management of a class in three groups with uniformity in each group. Those who make out a program usually find it hard to plan situations in which children are free to be intellectually active. (Philadelphia.)

Modern methods of instruction emphasize children's need to do creative work in order that they may learn to think. Each child should have many opportunities to find out whether or not his thinking has been clear and honest and his information adequate to meet the problems involved. (Radnor.)

Children are expected to work out their own problems and ask for help when it is needed and can be received without interfering with the rights of others. (Swarthmore.)

In a democratic school the teacher is one of the most influential members of the group and is responsible for giving her suggestions. But she is only one and must herself be a follower at certain times. When she does all the planning, selecting of materials, tools, and methods for accomplishing things, she changes the school situation from a democracy to an autocracy. (Radnor.)

The problem project—

has been used in the kindergarten since its beginning. (Memphis.)

Unless children have the opportunity to begin a problem, leave it for a while and come back to it, they are deprived of one of the most valuable means for evaluating their ability to plan and execute, and for realizing the need of greater information and skill. Working on problems which can be left from day to day also helps children to develop a longer attention span, so that the transition from play to work grows naturally out of their everyday experiences. (Radnor.)

The dictated, formal type of activity must be substituted by social activities where there is planning and executions of plans and where investigations and experiences made in school, home, street, and playground are related. (Stamford.)

## HEALTH

While the health of the children has always been recognized as one of the main objectives in the kindergarten, often the means for obtaining this objective have been mainly a matter of providing wholesome environment and equipment. Commendation is always given for well-planned and beautiful rooms.

Certain earlier surveys use the term "physical education" as synonymous with training in physical control. They contain such statements as—

Wherever the kindergarten fails to cultivate forward looking physical and mental control it is open to criticism. (St. Louis.)



Certain teachers are commended because their children demonstrated that—

in those games in which the purpose was avowedly to develop physical control there was actually in the playing of the game an effort toward more complete and accurate control. (St. Louis.)

Games have always been emphasized in the kindergarten as a means for gaining health. Simple activity games are excellent, but highly organized games and games in large groups demand a great deal of inhibition from young children. A high degree of—

organization can only be justified when it comes as an outgrowth of the informal organization which is a natural consequence of free play with materials, toys, etc. Organization that proceeds to build upon such foundations brings with it an understanding on the part of the children which insures co-operation and participation. (Stamford.)

Marching does not give the freedom of movement and vigorous exercises which children need. Each child has to regulate his step to the step of the child just ahead, else he will tread on his heels, or fall behind, and thereby leave a gap in the line. If he falls behind and tries to catch up, he loses the rhythm and thus even this value of the exercise is jeopardized. Little children need to walk, run, skip, hop, clap their hands, swing their arms, and whirl about, and they need space in which to get the full benefit from these activities. (Richmond.)

Only the most recent surveys make the following type of suggestions for health work:

Since the purpose of physical education is a matter of providing activities for better physical living, the unification of objectives and activities in physical education and health education would be desirable. (Springfield.)

This kind of education would include—

activities for the development of habits, appreciations, and attitudes in rest, sleep, food, cleanliness, and the like that will produce the maximum of health for children of this age. (Springfield.)

Through this kind of physical education the kindergarten—  
protects the pupil's health and practices him in the habits of health. (Honedale.)

The value of outdoor life for young children has been recognized by many individual teachers in all the systems surveyed, but there seems to have been little, if any, definite provision made for it either in the course of study or in the selection of equipment. Several surveys state that although "space and facilities for outdoor activities are very limited, almost every kindergarten makes some attempt in the matter of excursions." (Baltimore.) Many teachers make use of such opportunities as are available and are "very conscientious about keeping the children out of doors for a full half hour in addition to walks and excursions." (Winchester.) Wherever excursions have been considered an important part of the

curriculum teachers have found that they "prove valuable as an educational objective and as a health measure." (Philadelphia.)

More provisions for outdoor activities should be made because they "are undoubtedly among the most valuable in the training and development of young children." (Baltimore.) If such opportunities were provided there would be fewer places of which the following comment could be made:

Fine October weather found the playgrounds apparently almost entirely abandoned in favor of schoolroom exercise. (Watertown.)

### LANGUAGE

Another phase of kindergarten education which has received much attention in the surveys is training in the use of language. Primary teachers used to consider spontaneous conversation one of the greatest mistakes of the kindergarten, because the habit of talking "without raising hand" (Philadelphia) persisted after the children went into the first grade. Now they, as well as kindergarten teachers, consider free oral language one of the essentials for developing ideas.

One reason why working out large social projects is considered so valuable is because—

—much real conversation about the children's interests is necessary to enable the teacher and children to select real problems or to know where and how to find material for their solution. (Swarthmore.)

Through conversation children also—

learn to value accurate thinking and the correct use of language, including the choice of words, clear enunciation, and correct pronunciation, given in a pleasant voice. (Swarthmore.)

Conversation is especially important—

for a foreign group of children who have a more vital need for oral expression than any other activity the kindergarten offers. (Stamford.)

It is the teacher's function to create situations which will supply incentive and motive for free oral expression on the part of the children. When she gets this, she may then gradually correct the child's English, encourage him in the use of complete sentences in talking, and help him in his choice of words and expressions. (Richmond.)

Teaching English mainly through songs, rhymes, and stories is criticized as being valid only if the children "have sufficient experience with actual things to give these words real meanings." (Radnor.) Recent studies of children's vocabularies—

indicate a need for giving vital experiences to children so as to provide the ideas for which the ordinary word symbols stand. It would probably be illuminating and profitable for the teacher to find out just what the children's images are in relation to the songs, rhymes, and stories they repeat. (Radnor.)



Conversation periods seem to be most effective when the children are—

divided into small groups on the basis of language ability. This suggestion applies not only to the work with foreign children, but also to kindergartens where there is a large range in the maturity of the children. Breaking the entire number up into small groups for oral conversation enables all the children to take part. (Winchester.)

Conversations carried on in such groups—

may lead in a natural fashion to group composition in the form of stories about pictures, descriptions of excursions, letters to absent playmates, etc. (Richmond.)

Children also express their ideas of the life around them through representative play. These plays should be carried on "in connection with their manual occupations" to help them "give fuller and truer expression to the ideas and relations involved" in all their work. (Richmond.) Through conversation and representative play the kindergarten protects children's "language from warping, contaminating influences, and makes correct language common instead of uncommon." (Honesdale.)

### READING

There are several divergent opinions about the use of visual word symbols in kindergarten. Some educators feel that it is unwise to use any at all unless a child asks for a specific one which is necessary for his particular play or work. Others feel that near the end of the semester it is advisable to give the children who are about to be promoted to the first grade some preparation for the work in reading. For that reason each child is encouraged to learn the signs for his name and certain labels in the school and neighborhood. Other kindergarten teachers feel that the most mature children in the oldest group who indicate a readiness to profit by printed symbols may be given some definite organized experiences, probably enough to read the signs suggested above and stories which they themselves have made up about their own group experiences. (Radnor.)

It would seem that any city requiring reading or word recognition in the kindergarten must "give a very clear and satisfactory answer to the question, 'What is the total result?' Is it worth the expenditure of time required?" (Watertown.)

This same survey reports that when primary teachers were—asked what was accomplished (in reading in the kindergarten) they answered usually in general terms, such as knowing how to follow a line of print; what is meant by the terms word, sentence, etc.; how to locate a word in a known sentence. Altogether the product seems very small except in the case of unusually bright children.

This survey also suggests that it would be well to—let the matter of beginning reading be determined by maturity of pupils, and teach reading only to those who show competence. Before introducing reading

be sure that fundamental steps have been laid, such as a wide acquaintance with picture books, rich first-hand environmental experiences, and abundant use of oral language. (Watertown.)

### LITERATURE

Certain surveys emphasize the value of picture books in developing language ability and a love for literature.

A well-chosen library of picture books, attractively arranged in a secluded corner of the kindergarten, is a great stimulus to an interest in books. The library corner, together with the conversation and story periods in the kindergarten, is much more important as a basis for reading habits in the grades than is any amount of word recognition that is procured by drill on sight symbols. (Radnor.)

In one kindergarten a child—

brought his Stevenson's Child's Garden of Verses to school, and the teacher read the children some of the poems, and they found that one said "A birdie with a yellow bill." They showed other poems, saying, "This is about the wind"; and another child said "Way over there it tells about the little shadow." This is the very best preparation for first-grade reading. The stories and poems that the children become familiar with in the kindergarten through oral language are seen by them in another form on the printed page, and they become interested in the symbols that say these same words that they know and love so well. (Winchester.)

### AMERICANIZATION

Certain surveys point out the many contributions the kindergarten makes to Americanization. Visiting the children's homes is a—

very important phase of kindergarten work, and the work being done among the foreign women is particularly effective in matters of hygiene. (Winchester.) Health conditions in the home and malnutrition call for great skill in the cooperation of the home and kindergarten. (Philadelphia.)

The Hawaii survey states that—

the commission is convinced, after a careful study of the conditions which obtain in the islands, that no more important single step in Americanizing the children of the foreign born can be taken than in the establishment of a kindergarten or kindergartens in every settlement in the territory. (Hawaii.)

Americanization problems can not be confined to children of foreign parentage, although "different nationalities in a school increase the difficulty of modifying the curriculum to the needs of the children." (Philadelphia.) All children need help and guidance in the "cultivation of right habits of social adjustment." (Baltimore.)

The kindergarten has always emphasized (the development of these habits) in such a way that educators regard it as the best grade in our school systems for Americanization work. (Radnor.)



Right habits of work and social cooperation must be established early.

If children are not taught how to accept responsibility early in their school life, they must be taught to do so later. This puts them at a great disadvantage, as they have to break old habits as well as establish new ones. (Swarthmore.)

### NATURE STUDY

Nature study is mentioned in the surveys as an essential phase of the curriculum but one which is not always given enough attention. To develop in children an appreciation of nature and an interest in nature phenomena it is necessary that—

concrete experiences should be obtained (1) through excursions; (2) through responsibilities for the care of flowers, vegetables, and pets, observing their development and peculiar characteristics. (Stamford.)

As a means of developing an appreciation of nature the excursion seems to have been used more than the opportunity to care for plants and animals. "Comparatively few kindergartens have children's gardens, though seed planting in window boxes is common." (Philadelphia.) Still several surveys report that teachers have—

attempted to develop a love of nature in the children by making the greatest possible use of such facilities as are at hand. (Philadelphia.)

The care of living things is one of the most valuable experiences a child can have and is the best kind of nature study. (Winchester.)

While the care of the school garden during the summer months presents difficulties, there are quickly maturing flowers and vegetables \* \* \* which may be gathered before the close of school. (Winchester.)

Goldfish and canary birds, and in the spring rabbits and chickens, are pets that may be cared for by the children. (Winchester.)

### MUSIC

Comments on the work in music are conspicuously absent in the kindergarten sections of most survey reports. The few comments that are made indicate that more attention should be given to this phase of the curriculum.

While a few teachers show "unusual ability in music" (Stamford), the value of all musical experience is—

determined by the teacher's ability to select appropriate musical material of the right quality and quantity \* \* \* and the use of this material in raising the standards of children's work, in giving opportunity of creativity in music and in habits of correct rendition. (Stamford.)

There seem to be many kindergartens which deserve the following criticisms: "There was no evidence that definite principles were formulated to guide teachers" (Stamford) in the selection of musical material or methods of teaching. When the songs are long—

the tendency of the teacher is to focus attention and effort on teaching the words to the neglect of the far more important elements—musical tone and accurate pitch. (Richmond.)

Parallel with the teaching of a few simple songs there should be some definite work in ear training and voice placing. (Richmond.)

To do this skillfully teachers need help in formulating their own methods for teaching music.

The method or technique involved in securing (desired) achievements for children who are experiencing difficulties, as well as for children who know how to sing, should be clearly stated [in the course of study]. (Stamford.)

Children should do a great deal of individual singing in the kindergarten and first grade. Only in this way can children become independent in learning melody and rhyme. (Winchester.)

### FINE AND INDUSTRIAL ARTS

Manual activity seems to have been taken for granted as only a few mentions of this work are found in the surveys examined and most of those are connected with some other phase of the discussions.

Drawing and clay modeling are forms of occupation which deserve a larger share of attention than they have been given in the past. (Richmond.)

#### Emphasis in art work—

as in other subjects, should be placed on the development of children, and the product of the child should be evaluated on a basis of what he gains through doing rather than on the finished form. (Stamford.)

Art work that has meaning and purpose to the child and results in a product that satisfies his need and develops his artistic ability to the highest point possible, merits approval in kindergarten learning. (Stamford.)

#### There is—

ample motive for design in such minor projects as making of room decorations for festival occasions, the making of Christmas presents, valentines, May baskets, Easter cards, etc. (Richmond.)

#### It is through work with materials—

in which the objects made are familiar and interesting, the motive strong, the materials and process suited to the children's technical skill, that children of 5 or 6 years of age acquire the ability to attack problems in construction and representation and to work them out with relative independence. (Richmond.)

Habits of thrift, orderliness, responsibility in care of material, as well as initiative and independence in work, are the outcome of this type of industrial and fine arts teaching. (Stamford.)

### SUMMARY

The kindergarten curriculum is changing rapidly and must continue to change so as to produce a much larger fund of scientific information to use as a basis for judging children's activities.

There is still a great lack of common understanding among kindergarten teachers about the objectives of kindergarten education. The curriculum must provide experiences which will bring desirable changes in children's thoughts, feelings, and actions.

The need for constructive thinking is being more and more emphasized. This kind of thinking is necessary not only for manual



activities and original games but also in making right social adjustments.

Ideas are necessary for constructive thinking. The kindergarten must, therefore, furnish a wealth of valuable first-class experiences as a basis for these ideas.

There have been many criticisms of kindergartens because some children have acquired wrong attitudes in regard to school work. This need not occur, because children like to be held up to the best that is in them. They rejoice in their growth in power and accomplishment when high standards are attained while doing interesting things.

Children need not only opportunities for learning to appreciate good workmanship, the value of tools and materials, but also opportunities for developing appreciation of the beauties and wonders of nature.

All children need help in developing right behavior in relation to their companions. The spirit of fair play is the active principle in sympathetic appreciation of the work and abilities of others. This spirit is greatly increased by working and playing with others and in rejoicing in group pleasures and successes.

Habit formation is a fundamental part of education. Children have established many habits before they enter kindergarten. These are the foundation upon which the kindergarten must build.

Newer methods of procedure in the kindergarten emphasize the need for informal and creative work in place of formal work dictated by the teacher to large groups of children. The problem project method has been used by some teachers ever since kindergartens were established. More teachers would use it if they were not handicapped by lack of equipment, the struggle to combine freedom with order, the management of large classes of children, the difficulties involved in so planning work that children may have opportunity to be intellectually active.

While the kindergarten has always recognized the need for keeping children healthy, it is only recently that the surveys have suggested a closer relationship between physical education and health education.

Games for little children should not be highly organized except when the organization has been built up out of the children's own informal play or work. Outdoor activity and excursions are recognized as essential from a health standpoint as well as from an educational standpoint. Unfortunately the lack of physical apparatus for small children limits the opportunities for giving them the activities most conducive to the best mental and physical development.

Greater emphasis is now being placed upon the teaching of language to small children. Free conversation in the kindergarten used



to be frowned upon by primary teachers, but now they as well as kindergarten teachers realize that oral language is essential in the development of ideas. Real conversation enables teacher and children to select work necessary for children's development as well as to establish right habits in the use of English. Recent studies of children's vocabularies indicate a need for greater care in giving children right concepts for the words they use in song, story, and rhyme. As every child should be given the opportunity to express his ideas, it is advisable to conduct as much of the language work as possible in small groups.

There is a diversity of opinion about the use of visual word symbols in the kindergarten. While many agree that under certain conditions it is well to give children the opportunity to begin reading, they also agree that whatever is done along this line must be done informally and must be developed in relation to the children's group experiences. Any city requiring reading in the kindergarten should make sure that the advantages gained are worth the time required.

It is very apparent that more picture books are needed in the kindergartens. Through acquaintance with books and the development of a love for them children may develop a desire to learn to read. These attitudes toward books and their use are invaluable as preparation for the work in the first grade. Such acquaintance also helps children to develop a love for literature. Consequently, the books placed in the kindergarten library should contain examples of the best in children's literature.

The kindergarten has always understood the necessity for beginning Americanization with the very little children. Through emphasizing the need for visiting the children and their mothers in their homes, as well as through the classroom activities and the teaching of English, the kindergarten helps to give children of foreign parentage something like a fair start.

In most kindergartens the teachers have used whatever opportunities they had to help children appreciate the beauty and wonder of nature. Because it has been difficult to have children care for gardens and pets most of the nature study work has been done while taking children on excursions. Although this is a valuable method of developing a love of nature, it is not as valuable as giving the children the opportunity to care for plants and pets.

Comments upon music in the kindergarten are conspicuously meager in the survey reports. While some kindergarten teachers have unusual musical ability, most of them need a great deal of guidance in the selection of suitable musical material for kindergarten children and in developing proper methods for presenting the work.



Such comments as are made in the surveys about manual activities are usually connected with other phases of the discussions. This work depends so largely upon the equipment and supplies available that criticism of the type of art work done by the children suggests criticism of the materials supplied. Real art work is always the expression of an idea. Therefore, the opportunity given children for activity in this field must be based on their needs and experiences, and the results should be valued according to what children gain from the activity rather than by their finished products. Proper tools and materials are considered essential for good art work. Certain suggestions about them are given on page 9.

## Chapter IV

### PREPARATION, SUPERVISION, AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF TEACHERS

The teacher is the determining factor in the education of young children. The kindergarten room may be ideal, the equipment up to standard, and the curriculum well planned by a competent supervisor, but if the teacher does not measure up to her opportunities the work with the children will not bring results which could be accepted as good preparation for later school work or for living in a well-regulated home.

#### TRAINING OF TEACHERS

As a group, kindergarten teachers have had fully as much preparation for their work as the teachers in the other grades of the elementary schools. "Normal training of the teachers is almost uniform" (Philadelphia), while there are also many college graduates among kindergarten teachers and some who have done graduate work.

Kindergarten directors are usually required to have two years' training in a recognized normal school, or training school giving kindergarten courses, but the same amount of preparation is not always required of assistants. The fact is commented upon unfavorably in a number of surveys because the—

use of untrained assistants is detrimental to the work. (Baltimore.)

Kindergarten assistants should have the same training as the directors of kindergartens. The committee strongly recommends that the present training qualifications for appointments of kindergarten assistants be raised to the training qualifications required of the kindergarten directors. (Stamford.)

One of the important functions of the kindergarten is to prepare children to do the work prescribed for the first grade. If the kindergarten is to fulfill this function the teachers must be thoroughly acquainted with primary principles and activities. The way most

often recommended for giving teachers the necessary insight for this work is to give them their training—

in normal schools for both kindergarten and primary work, so that the kindergarten teacher will know primary work and the primary teacher will understand kindergarten work. (Winchester.)

Provision should be made in normal schools—

for a course of study which will definitely recognize the kindergarten-primary problem as one and the same. (Philadelphia.)

### NEED OF SUPERVISION

There have always been wide differences in teachers' understanding of the aims of education and in their "clearness of perception of the definite means of reaching a definite educational end." (St. Louis.) This vague understanding of objectives and methods seems to be due largely to lack of proper guidance. In many places there is little "evidence that definite principles were formulated to guide teachers" (Stamford) in the selection of curriculum material or of teaching methods.

The reports show that kindergarten teachers are "anxious to give their children experience which will be of value to them" (Radnor Township), and "are intelligently eager for help and desirous of moving forward in the right direction." (Philadelphia.) They realize that—

It is almost essential that a corps of supervisors be selected to work with the principals and teachers in bringing up standards and in more closely coordinating and standardizing work if any material progress for the schools as a whole is to be achieved." (Baltimore.)

There is often a grave "danger of haphazard, unsound, and detrimental procedure (when) there is no expert leadership in the newer lines of work." (Watertown.)

A supervisor is especially needed to give assistance in selecting experiences, materials, and methods of instruction where—

there is no prescribed course of study. (Baltimore.) It is in planning and presenting a modern course of study that the greatest help from the supervisor is needed. It is too much to expect that teachers and principals will be able to bring about the needed changes in curriculum and teaching procedure without such help. (Watertown.) With an efficient supervisor to direct them, a woman of experience in both kindergarten and primary grade teaching, most kindergartners would be capable of modifying and reconstructing their methods to conform with the best type of modern practice. (Richmond.)

Because kindergarten teachers need help in many specific lines of activity they—

should not be supervised by one who has not had kindergarten training. (Winchester).

Supervision should be given by one who is in sympathy with modern educational ideals, and who is well trained and qualified to help [a] group of



kindergarten teachers desiring to progress from their present standard to a higher one. (Stamford.)

The survey staffs recognize that one supervisor for the kindergarten and elementary departments is ideal, but they also realize that it is difficult—

to secure a supervisor who has had experience from the kindergarten to the sixth grade, inclusive. (Winchester.)

Fortunately—

supervision of the kindergarten by a special supervisor does not tend to isolate the kindergarten, if the same educational principles prevail in the kindergarten and primary grades. (Winchester.) Conferences between kindergarten supervisor and the primary supervisor are necessary to keep the work unified when there are two supervisors for these departments. (Winchester.)

There should also be frequent "conferences with the groups of kindergarten and first-grade teachers." (Winchester.)

### PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF THE TEACHERS

The supervisor is responsible to a large extent for the professional growth of teachers under her charge. This is especially pointed out in a survey which states that—

the influence of this staff (supervisory) was evidenced by the relatively large number of teachers who have undertaken further professional training. (Springfield.)

School authorities and the supervisor can materially help teachers in obtaining suitable opportunities for study.

Extension courses for professional stimulation and for an aid in curriculum making should be offered yearly. (Stamford.) There are a number of school systems which make it a practice to send more of their teachers to school each summer, the board paying part or all of their expenses. (Richmond.)

Not only are teachers taking summer courses, attending grade meetings and supervisor conferences, but in many places they have well-established clubs for study with mutual helpfulness. The recommendations given in the surveys suggest that the forward trend in these organizations is toward the kindergarten-primary type.

A kindergarten-primary association should be organized to foster professional spirit of interest in work, to offer opportunities for growth of teachers through interchange of ideas, to give strength to requests for improved conditions, and to encourage closer coordination of work between kindergarten and first grade. (Stamford.)

In some places the purely "kindergarten clubs" have been broadened in scope by "inviting the first-grade teachers to become members also." (Springfield.)

In those places where most of the teachers have been trained in local institutions "the introduction of outside teachers might bring about an interchange of ideas that would prove both stimulating and beneficial." (Philadelphia.)

## SUMMARY

The success of any kindergarten depends upon the teacher. Kindergarten directors are required to have as much preparation for their work as teachers in the other grades of the primary schools, but the same amount of preparation is not always required of the assistant teachers. Both director and assistant teachers should have at least two years of professional study in a recognized normal school or institution giving kindergarten courses. Many kindergarten teachers are college graduates and some have done graduate work.

As kindergarten and primary teachers should know the work of both grades, it is considered highly desirable to have both groups of teachers receive their training in institutions which recognize the kindergarten-primary problem as one.

The survey reports indicate that most kindergarten teachers are eager for sympathetic supervision. They understand that wise supervision is an essential help in selecting activities, materials, and methods of instruction suitable for the development of young children in line with the best present day principles of education. The supervisor's guidance will probably be most needed in defining standards for the curriculum. This should be done without in any way imposing uniformity of procedure upon teachers or children.

The supervisor should be in sympathy with modern educational ideas. She should be well trained in the many technical phases of kindergarten work, and be thoroughly qualified to be a leader for the teachers under her charge.

Teachers need encouragement to continue their professional education. School authorities should offer extension courses which will give inspiration and help in curriculum planning.

Other means for helping teachers in their educational development are conferences, exchange of visits between kindergarten teachers and between kindergarten and primary teachers, teachers' meetings, frequent classroom visits by the supervisor, and kindergarten-primary teachers association.

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Chapter V**THE KINDERGARTEN AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM**

The recognition of the kindergarten as an integral part of the school system is set forth in the following illuminating excerpts:

The kindergarten was once considered a luxury. It is now admitted to have its peculiar function in the right education of the child. No child who is of teachable mentality passes through a real kindergarten experience without living a richer life thereby. \* \* \* The whole child is put to school in the



kindergarten. (Alton.) The kindergarten is concerned with the spirit and content of education, and its object is to help the child live his life to the full in the earlier stages of development, which are recognized as the most important years of the child's life. (Winchester.)

The kindergarten represents not only a highly impressionable but an equally productive period in the child's life. The first demands the young child's right to protection from all that may injure or interfere with normal growth in these impressionable years. The second requires that we make a scientific study of the instincts and capacities developing at this period. (Baltimore.)

The need of making the kindergarten a continuous part of school procedure is generally accepted by leading educators, who believe that education is continuous growth. The same modern educational theory must be applied to kindergarten teaching, and continue throughout the grades, if this continuity is to be preserved without waste to a school system. (Springfield.)

The practice of placing 5-year-old children in a primary class instead of a kindergarten is a serious handicap to their development and "can not be justified on any grounds." (Sparta.) Wherever a—

beginners' class is substituted for a kindergarten the younger children are placed in the same room as the first grade and consequently receive very little attention. It is true that they are given lessons in phonics, reading, and some seat work, but, on the whole, they are idle most of the time, thus acquiring bad habits, habits of dawdling and inattention. The plan is wrong in that it is not based upon the modern conception of education as a process of development rather than a system of mechanical training. Instruction from books comes later in school life. The kindergarten opens the child's eyes to the world about him. (Sparta.)

The kindergarten—

has not only been generally accepted as a part of the city school system throughout the country, but the insistence of the demand has resulted in a marked increase in State legislation in favor of kindergartens maintained by public funds. (Baltimore.)

### INFLUENCE OF THE KINDERGARTEN ON THE PRIMARY GRADES

The value of the kindergarten in a school system is by no means confined to the work done in the kindergarten itself, however, even as a prevention of failures later on. One of its greatest values lies in its suggestions for right methods in the grades to follow. Its methods are right because they are based upon the conception that education is something more than a mechanical system of training. \* \* \* There are hundreds of primary schools throughout the country that have reorganized the customary work in these grades in accordance with the principles implied in this conception. (Wilmington.) It is one of the most welcome benefits of such a school (kindergarten) that its spirit and practices tend to spread through the grades, softening their formalism. If any is present, and creating in them the joyful spirit of child life and achievement. (Honesdale.)

### RELATION OF THE KINDERGARTEN TO PRIMARY GRADES

There is no sharp line in the educational process that divides the kindergarten from the first grade. Education of the child is growth and any break in this growth leads to a weakness in our curriculum which seriously handicaps the foundation of the next stage of development. (Stamford.)



Certain surveys suggest that one source of criticism of the kindergarten has been the real difficulty children have had in making the necessary changes in habits and attitudes when going from the kindergarten to the first grades. "Children trained in habits of initiative, independence, and earnest following of active pursuits" (Baltimore) in kindergarten will not "fit in to the formal scheme" (Baltimore) of some primary classes.

"The gap between the kindergarten and first grade is closing." (St. Louis.) The reports studied indicate that the surveyors now consider the kindergarten as an integral part of the school system. The staff for the San Francisco survey recommends "that the department of primary grades shall hereafter be called the department of primary and kindergarten instruction."

Such a unification of the kindergarten and primary departments—tends to introduce something of the first grade into the kindergarten and to retain something of the kindergarten in the first grade. (El Paso.) The most approved practice in kindergartens to-day tends to bring them more closely in touch with the first grade. (El Paso.)

On the other hand, the kindergarten is having an "influence of far-reaching character on the aims and methods of elementary education." (Columbia, S. C.) Greater attention to the school environment, equipment, curriculum, methods of instruction, and children's physical needs—

are some of the results of the recognition in the grades of the validity of the principles underlying kindergarten activities, that education comes by way of the child's own self-activity. (Columbia, S. C.)

The supervisors of primary schools also realize that the adjustment can not be made unless the first-grade schools put off unnatural formality and restraint, and introduce more of the spirit of free activity which is characteristic of a well-organized kindergarten. (St. Louis.)

External changes, however, will not bring about a true union. That can only be effected by a close articulation of work and by kindergarten and primary teachers having a deeper insight into and a higher appreciation of each other's work. (St. Louis.)

This idea is repeated in almost the same words in the Winchester report:

No external means, such as creating another grade, called a "connecting class" has ever solved this problem. The only solution is a course of study that is based upon the instincts and interests of young children rather than upon the teaching of the formal aspects of school subjects. (Winchester.)

A kindergarten is not an entity, it is a link in a chain and as such we should see to it that it will fit into the next link. (Salt Lake City.)

Teachers of the first grade have a right to expect that children who have had a kindergarten training will come to them with abilities "not looked for in children who have not had such training." (Salt Lake City.)



The Cleveland survey recommends—

that the work of the kindergarten and of the first grade be reorganized so that each shall have much natural play and each shall have some systematic training in the fundamental social arts. (Cleveland.)

In some (kindergarten) schools successful experiments are being tried in training pupils in those habits which will be helpful in the first grade and in familiarizing the pupils with the simple facts of number and with the use of language that will be helpful when they begin the formal study of number and reading. (St. Louis.)

*Some definite suggestions for unification.*—Several of the surveys contain definite suggestions for the unification of kindergarten and primary grades. Better methods of promotion and of more unified curricula have already been mentioned in this study. Better equipment in the primary grades is suggested as another means.

Lack of adequate equipment and the somewhat formal and mechanical character of the work of the primary grades operate to make difficult the close adjustment of kindergarten and primary work. (Winchester.)

Training students in normal schools for both kindergarten and primary work, so that the kindergarten teacher will know primary work and the primary teacher will understand kindergarten work, is also bringing about the right relationship between these grades. (Winchester.)

Still another way to develop unification of objectives and methods is to bring—

teachers of both departments together for the study of common problems. (Baltimore.) Kindergarten-primary association should be organized . . . to encourage closer coordination of work between kindergarten and first grade. (Stamford.)

Closer unification may be obtained by arranging an exchange of visits between teachers. Besides exchanging visits in their own department—

the kindergarten teacher should visit the primary rooms and the primary teacher visit the kindergarten room in each building, and frequent conferences should be the result of this interchange of visits. (Winchester.)

Because "there is a growing recognition of the importance of a close relation between kindergarten work and primary" (St. Louis), and since the changes necessary for the closer articulation of these two departments "require vigorous, unified central supervision, it is recommended that a single supervisor be put in charge of the kindergartens and primary grades." (Cleveland.)

#### RELATION OF KINDERGARTEN TRAINING TO CHILDREN'S PROGRESS THROUGH THE GRADES

One of the fundamental causes of criticism given to kindergarten work in the surveys examined is well expressed in the Cleveland survey which says that—

the effects of kindergarten training are by no means clearly defined, and they are often regarded by primary teachers as of doubtful value. (Cleveland.)



There have been a number of studies made to find out, if possible, just what these effects are and several surveys quote them.

A study made in Kenosha, Wis., for example, based on the records of 923 children who had had kindergarten instruction, and 738 children who had entered school without such training, while not conclusive, suggests that the first group had fewer who were retarded in their later school work. (Hawaii; Memphis; Columbia, S. C.)

A more recent study of the effect of kindergarten in lessening the number of repeaters is that by a committee, appointed in 1915, of the superintendents and school boards branch of the Michigan State Teachers' Association, reported by Berry. (Hawaii.)

The facts regarding repetition, as disclosed by this report, show that—

in the 19 towns without a kindergarten the percentage of repeaters, all grades considered, is 28.7 per cent greater than in the 75 towns having kindergartens; while in the first grade, taken by itself, the percentage of repeaters in the towns having no kindergartens exceeds the towns having the kindergartens by 69.5 per cent. (Hawaii.)

The following detailed study of the effects of kindergarten education is given in the Stamford survey:

An attempt was made in this study to discover the effect of kindergarten training upon the subsequent school progress of children. To this end children in Stamford were divided into groups—those who had kindergarten training and those who entered the public schools without kindergarten training. It was found that 45 per cent of those with kindergarten training were of normal age, 30 per cent over age, and 25 per cent under age. Compared with this, the group without kindergarten training had 38 per cent normal age, 52 per cent over age, and only 10 per cent under age. On the basis of these age-grade data it is evident that kindergarten attendance tends to decrease the number of over-age children and increase the number who are under age. It is evident that kindergarten attendance results in earlier entrance in school and that this age advantage is not entirely lost in later grades. (Stamford.)

The above situation is slightly reversed when the rate of progress is considered instead of the age-grade relations. The group with kindergarten training has 53 per cent of its number making slow progress and only 7 per cent making rapid progress compared with 49 per cent slow progress and 12 per cent rapid progress for the group without kindergarten training. The differences in these figures are much less than the age-grade differences. The earlier entrance to school of the kindergarten group probably results in some of the slow progress. Since the group without kindergarten training are quite consistently half a year or more older than the corresponding group with kindergarten training, their more regular progress may be the result of this added maturity. (Stamford.)

The survey of New Bedford shows—

that 49.4 per cent of the pupils reaching the sixth grade, within strictly normal age, entered school in the kindergarten subprimary, while of those one year or more beyond normal on reaching the sixth grade, only 17.6 per cent started in the kindergarten subprimary. (New Bedford.)



The report also states that—

comparatively late entrance unquestionably handicaps New Bedford children from the very start; a study of the figures indicates that this handicap averages approximately a year. And the handicap continues throughout the school life of the children, with all its serious effects on the extent of their education and their continuance in school into the higher grades and high school. (New Bedford.)

The Elyria survey also says that one—

cause of failure in the first grade is undoubtedly the lack of kindergarten training for children before they enter school. His term in the kindergarten saves the child a similar amount of preparation for school work in the first grade. (Elyria.)

These reports present certain advantages for children who have had kindergarten preparation for school work, but the following quotation suggests a need for further scientific study on this question:

The rather extensive practice of accepting in the 1B grade large numbers of younger children has probably resulted from the early entrance age set for kindergartens. Young children are allowed to go on into the grades with the expectation that the kindergarten work has fitted them to do so. As a matter of fact, when kindergarten and nonkindergarten children of the same age and intelligence at the time of entering the 1B grade are paired, the kindergarten-trained children who are now in the fifth grade show no advantage either in present achievement or in progress through the grades. (Watertown.)

A footnote for this quotation reads:

The changes in the curriculum of the kindergarten and primary grades, proposed in another section, will doubtless bring more advantages from the kindergarten as to later school attainment as well as more satisfactory results otherwise.

Inability to use the English language is often given as a serious cause of retardation.

The kindergarten is the best place to begin the removal of these language handicaps. Probably more can be done in this during a kindergarten year than in any subsequent year. (New Bedford.)

Where a large—

proportion of the population is foreign born, the school authorities can ill afford to weaken the school system at its most vulnerable point. (Elyria.)

No study has yet been made of the cost of the first-year repeaters as compared with the cost of kindergartens as a prevention of repeaters, but in view of the many problems to which a large percentage of repeaters give rise, there can be little question that the preventive measure would eventually prove to be the economical one. (Wilmington.)

#### LACK OF OPPORTUNITY TO GO TO KINDERGARTEN

The surveys suggest that while the kindergarten is accepted in theory, there are many children who are not given the privilege of attending. There are places in which there are less than one-fourth

as many children in kindergarten as in the first grade. When this is true it—

indicates a lack of interest on the part of the general public and school officials toward the training of the child of preschool age. (Philadelphia.)

It would appear that in locating kindergartens there has been no comprehensive study of the needs of the various sections (of the city). Some of those in greatest need of them have none at all. Where there is great need there is naturally little realization of the need, and therefore no demand has made itself felt. This does not relieve the school department of the duty to look out for portions of the city in which the people do not know how to look out for their own interests. (Salt Lake City.)

There should be at least one kindergarten in every primary school. (Philadelphia.)

For this reason—

systematic efforts should be made, through kindergarten teachers, a kindergarten supervisor, and elementary principals to secure enrollment of children generally in the kindergarten, as preparation for their entrance into the first grade. (New Bedford.)

### SUMMARY

The kindergarten was once considered a luxury but is now recognized as an important factor in the education of young children. Educators believe that the same principles must be applied to all education beginning with the kindergarten and continuing throughout the grades. Only in this way can continuity of aim and procedure be preserved without wasted energy on the part of the children and teachers.

The practice of placing 5-year-old children in a formal primary room, instead of a kindergarten, seriously handicaps their development. They do not have enough to do to keep them profitably busy and so are apt to develop habits of dawdling and inattention. Modern education demands a different type of experience for them. Children should be given an opportunity to grow rather than be subjected to mechanical training.

The continued spread of this belief has resulted in a marked increase in State legislation in favor of kindergartens maintained by public funds.

The surveyors believe that one great value of the kindergarten lies in its suggestions for other grades in the school system. They also believe that hundreds of primary schools have changed their methods and subject matter because they have accepted the principles of kindergarten education. The kindergarten, they believe, has helped to soften formalism and to create a joyful spirit of achievement in many elementary schoolrooms.

In the past, one of the greatest sources of criticism of the kindergarten has been the difficulty children have had in making the necessary changes in habits and attitudes in going from the kinder-



garten to the first grade. This difficulty is rapidly growing less because of the changes which have been made in both kindergarten and first-grade activities. The most approved practices tend to introduce something of the first grade into the kindergarten and to retain something of the kindergarten in the first grade.

A number of definite suggestions have been given in the surveys for unifying the work of the two departments. Unification of the curriculum is most often suggested as necessary for closer articulation of the kindergarten and first grade.

A greater amount of educational equipment and a freer method of procedure in the primary grades is also suggested as a way of establishing closer relationship.

Some better plan for promotion from kindergarten to first grade is advocated for many schools.

Kindergarten and primary teachers should be trained in an institution giving the same preparation to both groups of teachers.

More effective unification of kindergarten and primary supervision is considered necessary. Where there are different supervisors for each department they need to have frequent conferences about the objectives, standards, and methods of both departments.

The establishment of kindergarten-primary clubs to study common problems is also recommended.

Kindergarten and primary teachers should be encouraged to visit each other's classrooms. Interclass visiting possibly is one of the best ways of helping teachers in each department to know the work of the other department.

One fundamental cause for criticism of kindergarten work has been the lack of knowledge of what the kindergarten really does for children. Studies of this problem have been published or quoted in a number of surveys. The opinion gathered from these studies is that children save time by attending kindergarten as they reach the higher elementary grades some months younger than do children who have not had kindergarten training. This is reported as true even where some children have not maintained a normal rate of progress. It would greatly clarify opinion if a number of scientific studies could be made in this field of investigation.

The surveys state that in those districts where children must learn English the kindergarten undoubtedly helps them in their later work because they probably learn more English during a year in kindergarten than during any subsequent year.

There is a lack of interest in the training of prefirst grade children on the part of the school authorities and the general public in many places even where the theory of the kindergarten is accepted. On the other hand, there are now many communities in which there is at least one kindergarten in every primary school. Every principal,



supervisor, and teacher should make systematic efforts to enroll all children in kindergarten as a preparation for their entrance into the first grade. The surveys present many convincing reasons for establishing kindergartens in places which do not as yet maintain them.

## Chapter VI

### CONCLUSIONS

When the recommendations found in the surveys are grouped according to the subjects that are criticized or commended, it is possible to formulate certain generalizations about kindergarten procedure and administration. These generalizations have been more and more definitely suggested, as the fund of scientific knowledge about the education of young children has been increased through investigation and experimentation.

In the earlier surveys recommendations for the establishment of kindergartens were general in character, with emphasis placed upon the value of the kindergarten as an agency for Americanization. They also included statements concerning the fine spirit of the teachers, the need for proper equipment, and the surveyors' belief in the value of kindergartens. In those surveys that were made a little later the same items were emphasized, but statements about the value of kindergartens were reinforced by reports of studies which had been made of the comparative rate of progress of kindergarten and nonkindergarten children through the grades. Some of the latest surveys add to these studies. All take it for granted that every school system should include one or more kindergartens in every elementary school.

### INTERPRETATION OF FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

The broader interpretation of the underlying principles of kindergarten education has brought about many changes in policies, procedure, housing, equipment, and supplies that are considered desirable in the education of young children.

Working out an individual or group project often requires the use of many odds and ends of material in addition to blocks and the usual kindergarten supplies. These extra materials give children many opportunities for choosing and for judging the value of materials in relation to the purpose of the finished product.

Learning to do by doing is as applicable to choosing, planning, evaluating results, and making social adjustments as it is to sewing or using correct English. This principle demands not only a greater variety in the available materials, but also demands changes in the



methods of procedure by which the children work. Children do not all need the same experience at a given time; so provision must be made for greater individualization of instruction and for encouraging activities in small groups of children of approximately the same ability. When a class is divided into a number of groups the teacher assumes more and more a supervisory position, giving her help wherever it is needed and eliminating her personality where her help is not needed.

This kind of teaching places more responsibility upon the children for both what they do and how they work. Consequently the objectives to be achieved and standards of accomplishment as well as the children's abilities must be clearly defined in the teacher's mind so that she may help children judge the worth of their activities. As it is impossible to prescribe a set of logically arranged activities which will meet the needs of all individuals, it is necessary for teachers and supervisors to work out a flexible curriculum. This can be done by stating the objectives in terms of certain fundamental attitudes to be acquired by the children, giving many suggestions about the activities, materials, and methods by which these may be achieved and the habits, skills, and facts of knowledge necessary for successfully achieving them.

These principles apply just as truly to the work in the primary grades as in the kindergarten. A closer coordination of the activities of these departments could be established if the kindergarten and primary teachers thoroughly understood the significance of these principles.

The surveys mentioned several ways by which teachers may be helped to see that the problems of the kindergarten and the primary grades are vitally interrelated. The three ways which are most commonly mentioned are unified training of kindergarten and primary teachers; opportunities for all teachers to pursue common courses of study for information and inspiration for professional growth during the school year; and adequate supervision, preferably by one who has charge of both departments.

#### SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

School architects have responded enthusiastically to the call for help in solving the problems of properly housing kindergarten classes. They have developed plans and specifications for many rooms or suites of rooms which meet hygienic requirements and are also beautiful. Many of the building problems have been carefully thought out and standards have been established. Standards have been established in relation to the location of kindergarten rooms in the school building, provision for adequate lighting and ventilating, treatment of floor and wall surfaces, toilets, cloakrooms, and storage



cabinets for unfinished work and supplies. In drafting plans for new rooms, much thought has been given not only to hygienic considerations, but also to the convenience of both children and teachers and to artistic arrangements. Extreme simplicity is the keynote in planning kindergarten rooms. These standards have been formulated because it is recognized that the mental and physical health of the children and teachers depend largely upon their surroundings. When the right environmental conditions prevail it is easier to help children to establish those personal and social habits which make for healthful living. Habits of rest and relaxation are as essential in the children's daily routine as are habits of exercise and cleanliness, or habits of thinking and feeling.

For the same reason there should be some play apparatus in the kindergarten room. Play apparatus provides opportunities for relaxation through the exercise of the large muscles when the finer ones have been used for some time.

In studying the surveys there is evidence to show that a decided change has been made in the types of games used in kindergartens. Simple games in which many children may participate and which require much bodily activity have been substituted for the highly organized representative and symbolic games. Simple dramatic representation while playing with toys and materials has also supplanted much of the traditional game work.

The greater emphasis upon constructive work and representative play does not mean that there is less physical activity in the kindergarten. In fact, there is more than there used to be, for children are expected to get out and put away their work and supplies and to help a great deal in the care of the room. Then, too, the kind of work advocated in kindergartens demands a greater use of the large muscles than did the small gifts, and weaving and sewing materials and small crayons and paintbrushes. Large building blocks must be carried a few at a time between their storage place and the part of the room in which a child is using them; the manipulation of saw and hammer produces muscular development as well as muscular control; painting at an easel with a large brush or drawing on the blackboard with big crayons gives much more exercise than does art work carried out with the fine tools and small surfaces made necessary by seating children at a table.

#### NEED FOR CONTINUED SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION

Great progress has been made in scientifically determining standards for the material surroundings in the kindergarten and in the physical care of young children. Some experiments have been conducted along the lines of curriculum construction; habit formation; conditioning emotional responses, especially the elimination of fear



responses; and the relation of kindergarten training to progress through the grades. These investigations have been a splendid beginning, but they are only a beginning. More studies should be made in these and other fields of childhood education. Investigations can be made more easily now since better records are being kept of actual work done by school children in all grades. Three studies of the effect of kindergarten training upon school progress have been made recently. One, by Coleen Smith, is reported in the *Elementary School Journal*, Volume XXV, No. 6, February, 1925. Another, an unpublished study by Josephine MacLatchy, was conducted for the Bureau of Educational Research of the Ohio State University. The third, by Willis L. Gard, is published in the *Educational Research Bulletin*, Volume III, No. 7, April 2, 1924.

A list of topics which need investigation and experimentation would include such things as revision of the supply lists; use of physical apparatus by young children; means for giving children opportunities for intellectual activity as well as physical activity; standards of achievement in physical and mental activity; suitable forms of keeping records of children's development and the best uses to be made of these records, and especially the objectives of kindergarten-primary education; the activities which will lead to these goals and the materials, habits, skills, and information that are necessary for obtaining them.

#### NEED FOR MORE KINDERGARTENS

There is great need for the establishment of many more kindergartens. Less than one-eighth of the children between 4 and 6 years of age in this country are in the kindergarten. Among the many reasons for establishing kindergartens, two outstanding ones are suggested as sufficiently justifying the extension of kindergartens so that there will be at least one in every elementary school in cities, towns, villages, and consolidated rural districts.

The first reason is that the kindergarten helps children in making adjustments when they go from the individualistic atmosphere of the home to the formal group life of the elementary schools. During the year or two in the kindergarten children are helped to acquire certain habits and attitudes toward school activities which must be mastered before great progress can be made in the grades. As many of these have been given a considerable amount of discussion in this report only a few will be mentioned again for the sake of emphasis. First, habits of fair play and creative thinking can not be built up too early in a child's life. Probably both of these can be more easily acquired through working and playing in a social situation than in any other way. Second, out of the work with materials and in the group experiences all children, native-born children as well as foreign



children, may build up a fund of oral symbols which have a common significance for the members of the group. This basis for understanding the English language must be established before children can profit by the education which comes primarily from the printed page.

The second fundamental reason for establishing kindergartens is that many children must leave school as soon as the compulsory age limit is passed. It is essential that they be given the opportunity for as much education as possible before then, and kindergarten attendance adds one or two years to their school life. Quotations have been given in this study which indicate that kindergarten education not only adds kindergarten experiences to a child's school life but probably also adds some months' work in a grade more advanced than he would probably have made if he had not gone to kindergarten. Late entrance into the school system is quoted as a handicap which many children are not able to overcome. So it is essential that school authorities and the general public be aroused to the necessity of providing the best possible facilities for giving children a kindergarten education and of enrolling in kindergartens every child in the community who can profit by this type of education.

#### AN EVALUATION OF THE KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten practice of the country has received an extremely searching examination and appraisal, for it has been forced to square its principles and methods by criteria which have come into our present-day thought as a result of investigations in the field of physiological psychology and of child study and through the contributions made to the discussion by the Herbartians. These criteria have profoundly modified kindergarten theory and practice as set forth by Froebel and interpreted by his followers, but the Froebelian conception that education is a process of development rather than one of instruction; that play is the natural means of development during the first years; that creative activity must be the chief factor in his education; and that his present interests rather than future needs should determine the material and method of instruction, are all conceptions sanctioned by the conclusions reached in the fields of modern educational investigation and research. The fundamental things upon which the kindergarten activities are based are more generally indorsed than ever before, and it can confidently be said that the kindergarten is now so thoroughly established in public confidence and so strongly grounded in accepted theory that its place in our school system will never again be seriously endangered. (Columbia, S. C.)